



Dave Baker photo

SPRING TURKEY HUNTING

SPRING HUNTING SEASONS

TURKEY	Youth-Only	General Season
	April 4-5	April 18 - May 10

Both the youth-only and general spring turkey seasons are open statewide.

Youth-Only season: Only hunters ages 15 or younger by the hunt dates may hunt turkeys. Youth who hunt turkeys with a shotgun must be accompanied by an adult who is at least 18 years old. The adult must remain in a position to take immediate control of the youth's shotgun. Adults shall not carry firearms or archery equipment, may not accompany more than two youth at the same time, and are not required to have a license or permit.

BAG LIMITS

- A hunter shall take no more than two (2) birds during the spring season; those two birds shall be male turkeys or turkeys with visible beards.
- No more than one (1) bird may be taken per day.
- Turkeys taken by youth during the Youth-Only Season count toward the

spring turkey bag limit.

PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

Unless exempt, all spring turkey hunters must carry both an annual hunting license and the appropriate turkey permit, or have been issued an authorization number for the correct license and permit before hunting.

Hunters 16 and over must have a Spring Turkey Permit.

Kids ages 12-15 are eligible to purchase a Youth Turkey Permit, which is valid during any turkey season for one turkey. Youth hunters must abide by season bag limits and harvest restrictions but can use the youth permit throughout the license year. The Youth Sportsman's License includes one Youth Turkey Permit.

Kids under the age of 12 are not required to have a hunting license or permit to hunt turkey, but must abide by season bag limits and harvest restrictions.

Hunters Note:

A person may assist or call turkeys for another legal hunter. The assistant/caller does not have to possess a hunting license or turkey permit, BUT shall not carry any type of hunting equipment. Only hunters with a valid license and permit who have not taken the season bag limit can carry a

shotgun, archery or crossbow equipment when turkey hunting.

EQUIPMENT RESTRICTIONS

Those hunting during the General or Youth-Only spring turkey seasons must abide by the following equipment restrictions.

On some WMAs, special equipment restrictions apply, as noted in the Public Land Hunting section of this guide.

FIREARMS/AMMUNITION RESTRICTIONS

Legal

Hunters may use the following:

- Modern (breech-loading) and muzzle-loading shotguns no larger than 10-gauge and no smaller than 20-gauge are the only firearms that can be used or possessed when hunting turkeys.
- Shotguns used to hunt turkeys must be plugged to hold a maximum of three shells (two in magazine and one in chamber).

Illegal

Turkey hunters shall not use or carry:

- A rifle or handgun
- A shotgun larger than 10-gauge or smaller than 20-gauge
- Shot larger than number 4 (Shot sizes 4, 5 and 6 are most effective for turkeys.)
- Shotgun slugs

Q: Can I buy my child more than one Youth Turkey Permit?

A: Yes. Youth hunters may use multiple Youth Turkey Permits, but must follow season bag limits.

ARCHERY & CROSSBOW EQUIPMENT RESTRICTIONS

Legal

- Longbows, recurve bows, compound bows and crossbows
- Broadheads at least 7/8" wide
- Any draw weight (no minimum)

Illegal

Turkey hunters shall not use or carry:

- Barbed broadheads
- Broadheads smaller than 7/8" wide
- Arrows with chemical treatments or attachments containing chemicals
- A crossbow without a working safety device

Equipment that does not meet these requirements is prohibited for use when turkey hunting.

Harvest recording and tagging requirements

All harvested turkeys must be recorded, checked and tagged as outlined in the General Information/Telecheck section. Also check this section for shooting hours and hunter education requirements.

POSSESSION/RELEASE OF LIVE TURKEYS

Because of potential disease problems and genetic pollution, it is illegal to possess live wild turkeys. For the same reasons, domestic or pen-raised turkeys should not be released into the wild. Due to the potential for spread of disease, it is recommended that turkeys not be artificially fed. Providing standing corn, wheat or clover patches is a much better alternative. See the General

Information/Telecheck section of this guide for regulations on feeding wildlife from March 1 - **May 31**.

PROHIBITED HUNTING METHODS

A person hunting wild turkeys SHALL NOT:

- Use a dog during the spring season.
- Hunt from any type of vehicle or boat.
- Take a roosting turkey. (A roost is the place a turkey spends the night.)
- Use recorded or other electronically produced calls.
- Use live or electronic turkeys as decoys.
- Take a turkey by the aid of baiting, hunt on a baited area while bait is present, or hunt on a baited area for 30 days after all bait has been removed. (A baited area is any place where feed, grains or other substances capable of luring wild turkeys have been placed.) Turkeys can't be hunted over any private land area baited for deer. An area where grains or other feeds exist as the result of legitimate agricultural practices, or as the result of growing or manipulating a crop for wildlife management is legal for hunting.
- Call or attempt to call wild turkeys by mimicking the sounds made by a wild turkey from March 1 until the opening day of spring turkey season in any area open to turkey hunting if turkeys are reasonably expected to occur. Locator calls such as crow or owl calls are permitted.

Register your turkey!

For information about registering your turkey with the official NWTF records system, log on to www.nwtf.org or contact National Wild Turkey Federation, Attn: Wild Turkey Records, P.O. Box 530, Edgefield, SC 29824-0530, telephone: (803) 637-3106.

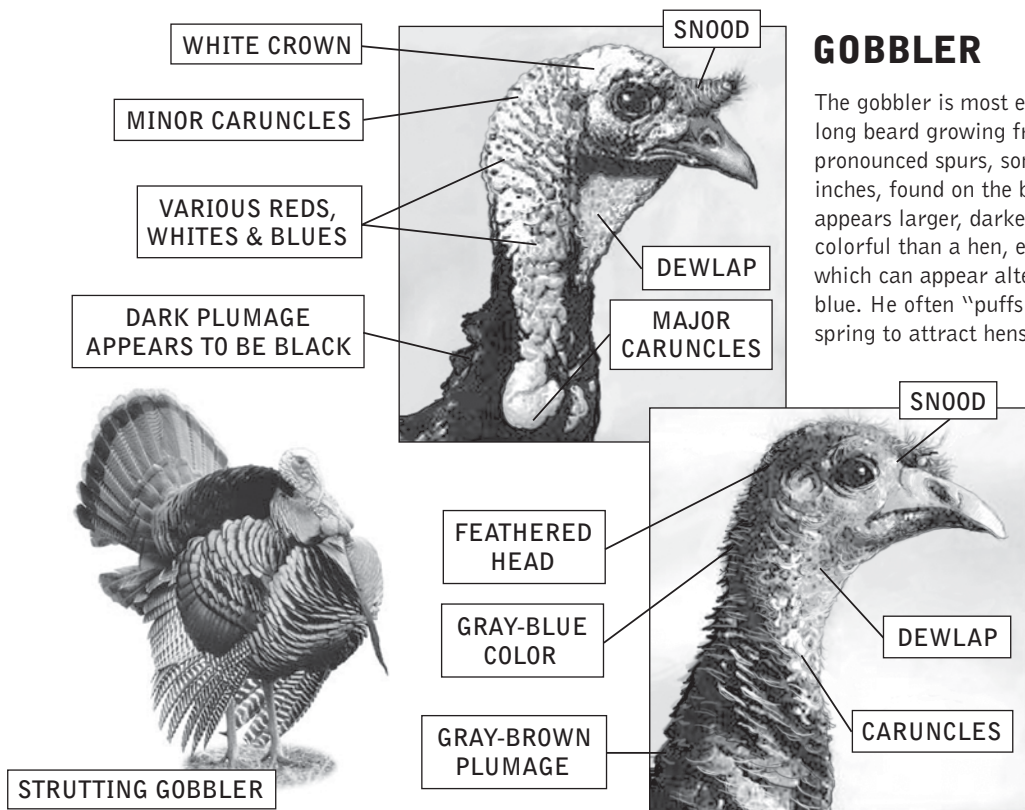
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IDENTIFYING WILD TURKEYS



GOBBLER

The gobbler is most easily recognized by the long beard growing from his chest, and the pronounced spurs, sometimes as long as two inches, found on the back of his legs. A gobbler appears larger, darker, shinier and is more colorful than a hen, especially on his head, which can appear alternately red, white and blue. He often "puffs up" and struts during spring to attract hens for breeding.

HEN

The hen's overall look is for concealment and protection. She is smaller and more drab than the colorful gobbler, so she can sit on her nest well camouflaged. Likewise, her head has more feathers to add to her camouflaged appearance.

Based on information and graphics from the National Wild Turkey Federation website, which can be viewed at www.nwtf.org.

SAFE TURKEY HUNTING TIPS

1. Don't stalk a turkey. The chances of getting close enough for a shot are slim, but the chances of becoming involved in an accident are even greater.
2. Eliminate the colors red, white and blue from your turkey hunting outfit. Red is the color most hunters count on to differentiate a gobbler's head from the hen's blue-colored head. White can look like the snowball-colored top of a gobbler's head. Leave those white tee-shirts and socks at home. Not only will these colors put you in danger, but they can be seen by turkeys as well.
3. Don't move, wave or make turkey sounds to alert another hunter of your presence. A quick movement may draw fire. Yell in a loud voice and remain hidden.
4. Do not attempt to approach closer than 100 yards to a roosting turkey. The wild turkey's eyesight and hearing are much too sharp to let you get much closer.
5. Be particularly careful when using the gobbler call. The sound and motion may attract other hunters.
6. When selecting your calling position, don't try to hide so well that you cannot see what's happening. Remember, eliminating motion is your key to success, not total concealment.
7. Select a calling position that provides a background as wide as your shoulders, and one that will completely protect you from the top of your head down. Small trees won't hide slight movements of your hands or shoulders, which might look like a turkey to another hunter who might be stalking your calls. Position yourself so you can see 180 degrees in front of you.
8. Camouflage conceals you. It does not make you invisible. When turkey hunting, think and act defensively. Avoid all unnecessary movement. Remember, you are visible to both turkeys and hunters when you move even slightly. Sitting perfectly still will help you more than all the camo you can wear.
9. Never shoot at a sound or movement. Be 100 percent certain of your target before you pull the trigger.
10. When turkey hunting, assume that every sound you hear is made by another hunter. Once you pull the trigger, you can never call that shot back.